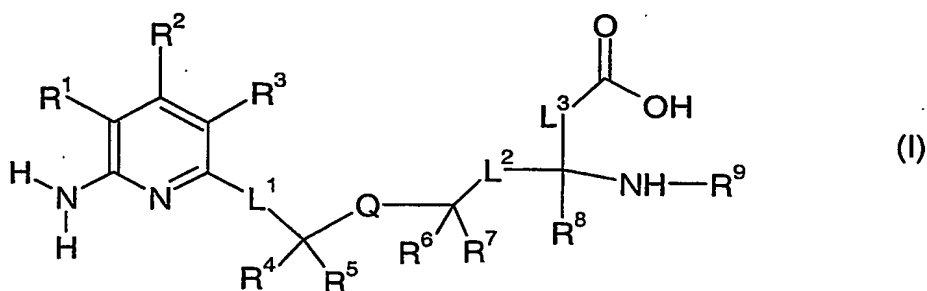


**CLAIMS:**

1. A compound of formula (I)



wherein

$R^1$ ,  $R^2$  and  $R^3$  independently represent H, halogen, C1 to 4 alkyl, C1 to 4 alkoxy, CN, MeS(O)<sub>m</sub> or NR<sup>10</sup>R<sup>11</sup>; said alkyl group being optionally further substituted by OH or one or more halogen atoms;

$L^1$  and  $L^2$  independently represent a bond or CR<sup>12</sup>R<sup>13</sup> wherein  $R^{12}$  and  $R^{13}$  independently represent H or C1 to 4 alkyl; said alkyl being optionally further substituted by OH, C1 to 2 alkoxy, CN or one or more halogen atoms;

$L^3$  represents -CH<sub>2</sub>- or a bond;

$R^4$ ,  $R^5$ ,  $R^6$  and  $R^7$  independently represent H, C1 to 6 alkyl, Ar<sup>1</sup> or Ar<sup>1</sup>-C1 to 4 alkyl;

or  $R^4$  and  $R^5$ , or  $R^6$  and  $R^7$ , may be joined together such that the group CR<sup>4</sup>R<sup>5</sup> or the group CR<sup>6</sup>R<sup>7</sup> represents a C3 to 6 cycloalkyl ring;

Q represents O, S(O)<sub>n</sub> or NR<sup>16</sup>;

$R^{16}$  represents H, C1 to 6 alkyl, C1 to 6 alkanoyl, C1 to 6 alkyl-SO<sub>2</sub>-,  
C1 to 6 alkyl-O-CO-, Ar<sup>2</sup> or Ar<sup>2</sup>-CH<sub>2</sub>-;

Ar<sup>1</sup> and Ar<sup>2</sup> independently represents phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaromatic ring  
containing one to three heteroatoms independently selected from O, S and N; said phenyl  
or heteroaromatic ring being optionally substituted by one or more substituents  
independently selected from halogen, CN, CF<sub>3</sub>, C1 to 3 alkyl, C1 to 3 alkoxy, hydroxy, C1  
to 3 thioalkoxy or NR<sup>14</sup>R<sup>15</sup>;

m and n independently represent an integer 0, 1 or 2;

$R^8$  represents H or C1 to 4 alkyl; said alkyl being optionally further substituted by OH, C1  
to 2 alkoxy, CN or one or more halogen atoms;

$R^9$  represents H or C1 to 4 alkyl;

$R^{10}$  and  $R^{11}$  independently represent H, C1 to 2 alkyl, C1 to 2 alkanoyl or C1 to 2  
alkylsulfonyl;

$R^{14}$  and  $R^{15}$  independently represent H, C1 to 4 alkyl, C1 to 2 alkylsulfonyl or C1 to 4  
alkanoyl; said alkyl being optionally further substituted by OH, C1 to 2 alkoxy, CN or one  
or more halogen atoms;

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

2. A compound according to Claim 1 wherein Q represents S.

3. A compound of formula (I), according to Claim 1, which is:

S-[(6-amino-4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl]-L-cysteine;

S-[2-(6-amino-4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)ethyl]-L-cysteine;

S-[(6-amino-4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl]-L-homocysteine;  
S-[(6-amino-4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl]-2-methyl-L-cysteine;  
(3R)-S-[(6-amino-4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl]-3-methyl-L-cysteine;  
O-[(6-amino-4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl]-L-serine;  
5 O-[(6-amino-4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl]-D-serine;  
3-[[[(6-amino-4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl](methylsulfonyl)amino]-L-alanine;  
3-[[[(6-amino-4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl]amino]-L-alanine;  
(3S)-S-[(6-amino-4-methyl-2-pyridinyl)methyl]-3-methyl-L-cysteine;  
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

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4. A compound of formula (I), according to any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, for use as a medicament.

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5. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of formula (I) according to any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in admixture with a pharmaceutically acceptable adjuvant, diluent or carrier.

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6. The use of a compound of formula (I) according to any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment or prophylaxis of human diseases or conditions in which inhibition of nitric oxide synthase activity is beneficial.

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7. The use as claimed in Claim 6 wherein it is predominantly inducible nitric oxide synthase that is inhibited.

8. The use of a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament, for the treatment or prophylaxis of inflammatory diseases.

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9. The use as claimed in Claim 8 wherein the disease is rheumatoid arthritis.

10. The use as claimed in Claim 8 wherein the disease is osteoarthritis.

11. The use of a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in the manufacture of a medicament, for the treatment or prophylaxis of pain.

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12. The use of a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, in combination with a COX-2 inhibitor, in the manufacture of a medicament, for the treatment or prophylaxis of inflammatory diseases.

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13. A method of treating, or reducing the risk of, human diseases or conditions in which inhibition of nitric oxide synthase activity is beneficial which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula (I), as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, to a person suffering from, or at increased risk of, such diseases or conditions.

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14. A method of treating, or reducing the risk of, inflammatory disease in a person suffering from, or at risk of, said disease, wherein the method comprises administering to the person a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula (I), as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

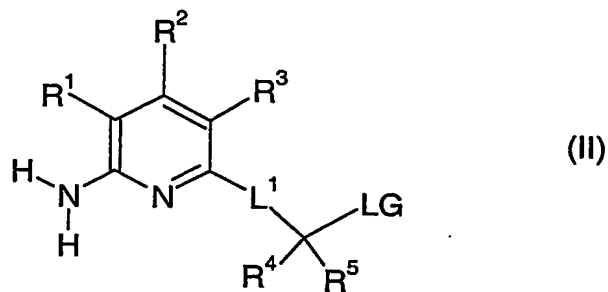
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15. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I), as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 3, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, enantiomer or racemate thereof, wherein the process [wherein variable groups are, unless otherwise specified, as defined in Claim 1] comprises:

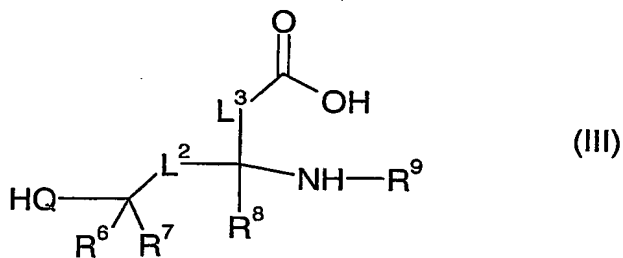
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(a) reaction of a compound of formula (II)

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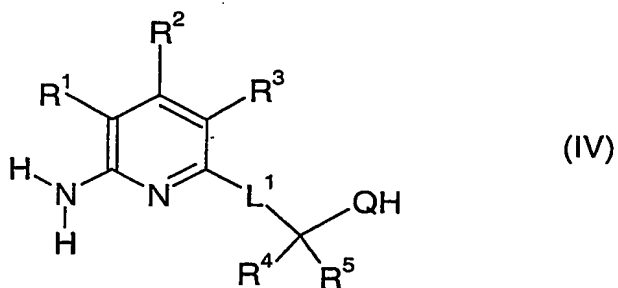


wherein LG represents a leaving group,  
with a compound of formula (III)



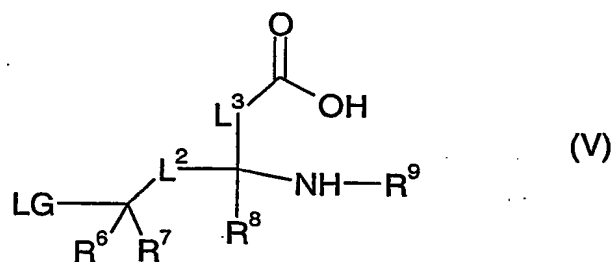
or

(b) reaction of a compound of formula (IV)



with a compound of formula (V)

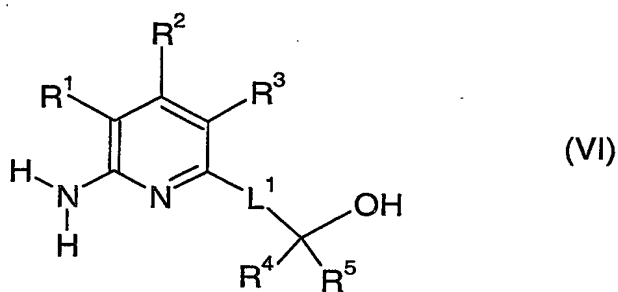
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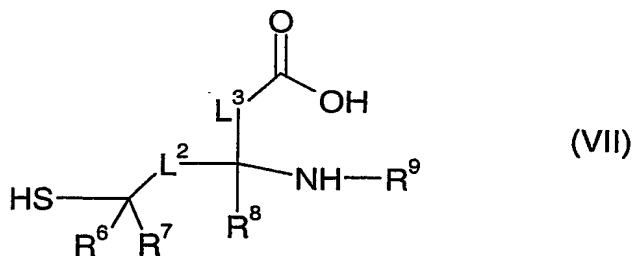
wherein LG is a leaving group; or

(c) when Q represents S, reacting a compound of formula (VI)

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with a compound of formula (VII)



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under Mitsunobu conditions;

and where desired or necessary converting the resultant compound of formula (I), or another  
 15 salt thereof, into a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; or converting one compound of  
 formula (I) into another compound of formula (I); and where desired converting the resultant  
 compound of formula (I) into an optical isomer thereof.